GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3066
ANSWERED ON:21.03.2017
GM Crops
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Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and Agricultural Universities have taken any steps for conducting field trials of Genetically Modified (GM) crops in the country and if so, the details thereof, State-wise; and

(b) the steps being taken to reduce the time lag between an application for conducting field trials and its subsequent approval or disapproval?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
(SHRI SUDARSHAN BHAGAT)

(a) As decided by regulation system of India, i.e. the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) and Review Committee on Genetic Manipulation (RCGM) functioning under Environment (Protection) Act 1986, the commodity specific institutes and national research institutes of ICAR as well as State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) have been engaged in carrying out field trials (confined field trials Bio-safety Research level (BRL) − I and BRL − II) after due no objection certificate (NOC) from concerned states. For various experiments with recombinant DNA technology in lab/fields, specific locations as per the requirements are enabled appropriately in such institutes with the approval of Institute Bio-safety Committee (IBSC) at the time of proposing the trials during execution and post-trial period. Further a committee has been constituted involving representatives from Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change; Ministry of Science and Technology; and Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare which will notify the specific sites for conduct of confined field trials in GM crops in National Agricultural Research System (NARS).

Field trials are conducted uniformly across the states as per standard bio-safety norms defined by GEAC, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC). For each new Genetically Modified (GM) event, it takes four years (One year for event selection trials: two years for conducting BRL-I and one year for conducting BRL-II) to conduct field trials by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research Institutes and SAUs.

Confined field trials have been conducted in different crops in the past which include:-

i) BRL-I and BRL-II trials being conducted regularly for testing the various GM cotton varieties and hybrids.
ii) BRL-II level trials of GM brinjal were completed before 2009.
iii)In case of Indian mustard, a GM hybrid DMH-11 was tested in BRL-I and BRL-II trials upto 2014-15 in the states of Rajasthan, Punjab and Delhi.
iv)Presently the confined field trials are being conducted in case of chickpea and pigeonpea at Indian Institute of Pulses Research, Kanpur for event selection for resistance to pod borer.

State-wise detail are available with the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change

(b) The procedural time and time of experiments are within the regulation system, the NOC by state government and the agency/institute innovating the genetically modified (GM) product. There is no time lag by the ICAR institutes in taking up the experiment once RCGM clears the conduct of the trial; provided the sufficient time is available for planting of a crop during the season.

RCGM meetings are held regularly on monthly basis, wherein, proposals of field trials on GM crops are considered and based on merit these are recommended to GEAC for approval or disapproval.

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